

# The Twelve Apostles

## Port Campbell National Park

Pounded by wild seas and fierce winds, the Twelve Apostles have been sculpted over thousands of years to become one of the most impressive natural sites in Australia. Towering rock stacks loom out of the ocean just off shore from sheer limestone cliffs. Arches, islands and blowholes have been carved out of the soft cliffs by the wind and sea. Many ships have come to grief on the rocky coastline, earning it the title of the Shipwreck Coast.



### Port Campbell National Park

Port Campbell National Park is world famous for its extraordinary collection of wave-sculpted rock formations and the Twelve Apostles.

Loch Ard Gorge, site of the 19th century shipwreck 'Loch Ard', as well as the Island Archway and London Bridge are other highlights. The Island Archway collapsed in 2009, highlighting the fragile and ever-changing nature of Victoria's coastline.

### The Twelve Apostles

The famous Twelve Apostles located in the Twelve Apostles Marine National Park, are majestic rock stacks that rise up from the Southern Ocean on Victoria's dramatic coastline.

Created by constant erosion of the limestone cliffs of the mainland beginning 10–20 million years ago, the stormy Southern Ocean and blasting winds gradually eroded the softer limestone, forming caves in the cliffs.

The caves eventually became arches and when they collapsed rock stacks up to 45 metres high were left isolated from the shore. While the Twelve Apostles are impressive at any time of day, sunrise or sunset are particularly good times

to visit as the Twelve Apostles change colour from dark and foreboding in shadow to brilliant sandy yellow under a full sun.

There are seven rock stacks that comprise the Twelve Apostles - six are on display in the classic view enjoyed by millions of people over the years, with the seventh located several metres away from the corner of the main viewing platform. Originally there were eight rock stacks when named the Twelve Apostles, however, one of the stacks collapsed dramatically in July 2005. The remains can be seen from the main viewing platform.

The Twelve Apostles were historically called The Sow and Piglets. The Sow was Mutton Bird Island, which stands at the entrance to Loch Ard Gorge and her Piglets were the numerous rock stacks located along the coast, including the Twelve Apostles. There are many more spectacular limestone rock stacks along the Shipwreck Coast, including in Bay of Islands Coastal Park.

### Visiting the Twelve Apostles

Start your visit by heading to the Twelve Apostles Kiosk and Carpark before taking the walk to view the amazing Twelve Apostles coastline. The site offers kiosk, information, shelter

and toilets. Walk the short distance (500m) through a tunnel under the Great Ocean Road to various lookouts offering expansive, breathtaking views.

From the Twelve Apostles carpark there is also an easy 2.2km return walk to Gibson Steps Lookout. The lookout is above the beach with excellent views East and West.

### Getting there

Port Campbell National Park lies between Princetown and Peterborough, 285 km west of Melbourne via the Great Ocean Road (4-5 hours drive), and 240 km from Melbourne via Colac.

### Walking

The park offers many short walks to lookouts with spectacular coastal views:

#### Bay of Martyrs Walk

Follow the walking track from the eastern end of the carpark. This short spectacular walk leads to the site where the *Falls of Halladale* ran aground in 1908.

#### Port Campbell Discovery Walk

Start the walk near Port Campbell beach by crossing the mouth of Campbells Creek, or by following the signs from the Scenic Town Lookout Carpark on the Great Ocean Road, west (Warnambool side) of Port Campbell township.

#### Loch Ard Gorge Area

Three easy self-guided walks have been developed around the Loch Ard Gorge area. Allow two to three hours to make the most of your visit here.

**Shipwreck Walk** - this walk tells the tragic story of the Loch Ard shipwreck from the wreck site to the cemetery.

**Geology** - explains the geology of the coastline and the forces that shape it.

**Living on the Edge** - discover life on the edge of these sheer cliffs.

### Canoeing

The Gellibrand River is ideal for canoeing. Access is from the Gellibrand Inlet.

### Camping

Camping and caravan accommodation is only available in the adjoining townships of Port Campbell, Peterborough and Princetown.

Sleeping overnight in the park or carparks is not permitted.

### Diving and swimming

When the sea is very calm there is excellent wreck and reef diving off Port Campbell National Park. Diving opportunities are also available in local marine national parks and marine sanctuaries (see marine park visitor guides for more information). Please remember that all wrecks and artefacts are protected by law.

Many beaches are exposed to unseen dangers such as ocean currents, rips and reefs. Parks Victoria recommend swimming only on beaches patrolled by lifesavers.

### Fishing

Both Curdies Inlet and Gellibrand River are great spots to see if the fish are biting. There is good ocean fishing at Newfield Bay, Clifton Beach and from the Port Campbell jetty. Be sure to obtain a Victorian Amateur Fishing Licence before you fish. Fishing is not permitted in Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries. See marine park visitor guides for protected area boundaries and activity guidelines and boundaries.

For more information about the Port Campbell National Park, please visit: <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/port-campbell-national-park>

### Be prepared and stay safe

Port Campbell National Park is in the South West Total Fire Ban District. Be aware of forecast Fire Danger Ratings for this fire district. No fires may be lit on days of Total Fire Ban.

On days of Code Red Fire Danger this park will be closed for public safety. Closure signs will be erected and rangers will patrol when possible, however you may not receive a personal warning that the park is closed. Check the latest conditions by calling **13 1963** or visiting [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)